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REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTICES.

CHAUCER.

The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, edited from numerous manuscripts by the Rev. WALTER W. SKEAT, Litt. D., LL. D., M. A. 6 vols. Oxford, At the Clarendon Press, 1894; with supplementary volume containing Chaucerian and Other Pieces, 1897.

Studies in Chaucer: his Life and Writings, by THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY. 3 vols. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1892.

The Student's Chaucer. Edited by Prof. SKEAT, with Introduction and Glossary. 1 vol. Macmillan & Co., 1895.

The "Globe" Chaucer. Edited by ALFRED W. POLLARD, H. FRANK HEATH, MARK H. LIDDELL, W. S. MCCORMICK, with Introduction and Glossary. 1 vol. London and New York, Macmillan & Co., 1898.

In addition to his other well-known works illustrative of Chaucer's writings, Prof. Skeat has now placed all students of Chaucer under increased obligations by the completion of the Oxford edition with the publication of the supplementary volume containing "Chaucerian and Other Pieces." Although the other six volumes have been before the public for a few years, it may be well to state here the contents of each volume. Vol. I contains a Life of Chaucer, the Romaunt of the Rose, and the Minor Poems; II, Boethius and Troilus; III, House of Fame, Legend of Good Women, the Astrolabe, and the Sources of the Canterbury Tales; IV, the Canterbury Tales (Text); V, the Canterbury Tales (Notes); VI, Introduction, Glossary, and Indexes. Prof. Skeat has further edited the complete works of Chaucer in one volume, as "The Student's Chaucer," being the text of the Oxford edition. Mr. Pollard, author of the "Chaucer Primer," edited in 1894 the "Eversley" edition of the Canterbury Tales in two volumes, and now, with the assistance of co-laborers, he has also edited in one volume, as the "Globe" edition, the complete works of Chaucer, preceded by a Life and Introduction and followed by a Glossary. In this embarrassment of riches, especially when increased by the three volumes of Prof. Lounsbury's "Studies in Chaucer," which were published six years ago, it is difficult to see what more the student of Chaucer could desire.

Surely there is no excuse now for an ignorance of Chaucer even on the part of that much-addressed personage, the general reader.

The several chapters of Prof. Lounsbury's work are numbered continuously and embrace the following subjects: I, the Life of Chaucer; II, the Chaucer Legend; III, the Text of Chaucer; IV, the Writings of Chaucer; IV, 2, the Romance of the Rose; V, the Learning of Chaucer; VI, the Relations of Chaucer to the English Language and to the Religion of his Time; VII, Chaucer in Literary History; VIII, Chaucer as a Literary Artist. A brief account of each is given in the Introduction. This is undoubtedly the most complete work on Chaucer and his writings that we possess. It is valuable for its account of exploded errors as well as for its statements of recently ascertained facts. A general criticism, however, may be made, that it is too diffuse; it might have been condensed to advantage. As to Prof. Lounsbury's views on some disputed questions, he acknowledges that they are not those generally held by Chaucer scholars, but he has the courage of his convictions and proceeds to defend earnestly his opinions. This is as it should be. In such a work an author should give the reasons for the critical faith that is in him. But I cannot think that Prof. Lounsbury has settled the questions. In regard to the burning one of the Chaucerian authorship, in whole or in part, of the existing version of the "Romaunt of the Rose," we must render the Scotch verdict in his case, *not proven*. I prefer for the present to take the views of Lindner, Kaluza, Kittredge, and Skeat. Prof. Skeat has already replied satisfactorily to some of Prof. Lounsbury's arguments in the Introductions of vols. I and VI, where he discusses the poem. The "Globe" edition prints the "Romaunt of the Rose" last, and the editor, Mr. Liddell, says of it: "All that we can say at present is that A (vv. 1-1705) may be part of the translation Chaucer says he made; that C is also possibly Chaucer's, but this assumption is less likely than the former; that B (vv. 1706-5810) is probably the interpolation of a Northern writer later than Chaucer who made an attempt to join the two parts of the poem A and C, and make a complete translation, but wearied of the task and dropped it at v. 5810." Prof. Lounsbury's view that Chaucer wrote the *whole* of the present version must be rejected. The evidence of language and metre is against him. Moreover, Chaucer could never have made the bungling junction of 1705 and 1706; something is wrong here. Why, too, did Chaucer refrain from translating the portion omitted between 5810 and 5811, or has that portion alone been lost? The last word has not yet been said on this poem.

A part of Prof. Lounsbury's "Chaucer Legend" appeared several years ago in *The Atlantic Monthly* as "Fictitious Lives of Chaucer." It was hardly necessary to occupy so much space in discussing the spurious "Testament of Love," for, with the reference to the "Troilus" before us (Skeat's ed. VII, p. 123, ll. 253-4), it is

hard to see how Chaucer could have written it, even if there were no other arguments against his authorship. The uncritical judgment of earlier editors is responsible for the inclusion in Chaucer's works of many writings now known to be spurious. Prof. Skeat has shown us that Moxon's edition is a prime offender and has been uncritically followed. Both Profs. Lounsbury and Skeat give due credit to Tyrwhitt for his sound judgment in editing Chaucer, but, unfortunately, he lived before the days of the Chaucer Society and the recent investigations of Middle English grammar and versification. In one important point I must take issue with Prof. Lounsbury. He says (Introduct., p. xxv): "It will be observed, also, that in most instances the extracts that are introduced from Chaucer's writings appear in our present spelling. The reasons for adopting this course will be found at the end of the seventh chapter" [II 264-279]. I have re-read these reasons, but they do not carry conviction to my mind. Some of Prof. Lounsbury's quotations sound as if they were taken from a very bad text of Chaucer. The question is more one of pronunciation, especially of accent, than of spelling, and Chaucer's spelling is a key to his pronunciation as well as to his grammar, and pronunciation determines the rhythm, without which there can be no complete enjoyment of Chaucer. Modernize the spelling and we destroy the rhythm. The case of Shakspeare is different, for his spelling is much nearer that of the present day, it does not affect his grammar and rhythm, and there is no question here of the final *-e*. I think that correct rhythm is an aid "towards the appreciation of the beauty and power of Chaucer's poetry" (III, p. 273), while fully conceding that "the literary study of Chaucer is one thing; the linguistic study is quite another." The former is certainly helped by the latter, even if the latter is very elementary. On this point I concur with Prof. Skeat (V, p. xxv).

Prof. Lounsbury's chapters V, VII and VIII are of particular interest, and chapters V and VII mark a distinct advance in our knowledge, showing the results of careful study of subjects which have never before been so well treated. The modernizations of Chaucer, from Dryden and Pope to Wordsworth and Leigh Hunt, are rightly characterized as failures, but no one is in danger of mistaking these for Chaucer, whereas, if we undertake to modernize Chaucer's language, we produce a Chaucer that is not Chaucer.

There is one reference of Prof. Lounsbury's, repeated four times, which is an oversight. In I, 271, 273, 442, and III, 44, we have reference to Beaumont's letter to Speght of June, 1597, and in each case he is referred to as "the dramatist Beaumont." According to the common chronology, the well-known dramatist, Francis Beaumont, was at that time about thirteen years of age, and could scarcely be referring to "those ancient learned men of our time in Cambridge," who "did first bring you and me in love with him," i. e. Chaucer. The reference is manifestly to Francis

Beaumont, the justice, father of the dramatist, as the dates correspond, and he died in 1598.

Prof. Skeat has based his text of the *Canterbury Tales* on the Ellesmere MS, but gives at the foot of the page the most important variants of the other MSS. He regards the spelling of the Ellesmere MS as approaching most nearly to that which Chaucer himself used, and in default of Chaucer's own autograph this is as near as we can ever hope to come to it. The arrangement of the Chaucer Society is adopted for the order of the *Tales*. Mr. Pollard also, in the "Globe" edition, uses the Ellesmere MS as the basis of his text, recording variants in an abridged form, which is explained in the Introduction. He too adopts the Chaucer Society's order of the *Tales* by groups, which may now be regarded as the standard.

The General Introduction of a hundred pages in Prof. Skeat's volume VI explains fully his objects in producing this excellent edition. He wished to provide "a thoroughly sound text," founded solely on the best MSS and the early printed editions; also to separate Chaucer's genuine works from the spurious, which have not yet been totally suppressed; and again, it was necessary to take advantage of "the recent advances in our knowledge of Middle English grammar and phonetics." He has also provided a very full body of Notes, which furnish needful help in the explanation of Chaucer's allusions. The Glossary too is very full and excludes all non-Chaucerian forms and words. The words in Fragment A of the "Romaunt of the Rose" are included in this general Glossary, while a separate one has been supplied for Fragments B and C, and still another for the "Tale of Gamelyn." Indexes of Proper Names, of Authors Quoted or Referred to, and a list of Books Referred to in the Notes, together with a formidable list of Errata and a General Index, are appended. The Introduction contains a summary of Chaucer's pronunciation, his treatment of open and close *o* and *e*, his peculiarities of rime, metres and forms of verse, grammatical outlines, versification, and remarks on his authorities. We are thus provided with all necessary help for an intelligent appreciation of Chaucer, and have no reason to think that this work will ever be superseded. In his treatment of versification Prof. Skeat assumes that a verse consists of a succession of "speech-waves," each containing a strong syllable, alone, preceded or followed by a weak syllable, or both preceded and followed by such weak syllable, hence, besides the iambus and trochee, he makes much use of the amphibrach. He is very scornful of the "wooden method," which "breaks up the line into bits of equal length," and "exhibits the result as the Procrustean formula to which all lines of five accents should be reduced." After a careful reading of his remarks I do not think that anything is gained by his method. No one who divides each iambic pentameter into five iambs and marks the feet by dividing lines imagines that there

must be a pause at each dividing line, but he would read the line precisely as Prof. Skeat does. Otherwise he would imitate the old-fashioned scanning of the dactylic hexameter, which some of us may have heard in our youth, as *Roma vi—rumque ca—no Tro—jae qui—primus ab—oris*,—English pronunciation too,—but that belonged to the antediluvian period of school-teaching, and has been long since relegated to the abode of departed spirits, some of them very real spirits in their day. Prof. Skeat insists that “there is no elision at the medial pause” (p. xxxi), and that when *his* loses its accent, it loses also its initial *h*. Both statements may well be questioned, especially the last. Unaccented *his* may easily be pronounced *hiz*, not *iz*, which is a species of Cockneyism that Chaucer knew not of. The question of elision is a matter of ear, and to my ear the line flows much more smoothly when final unaccented *e* before a vowel is elided at the pause as well as elsewhere. The hiatus even there is very offensive. So too with respect to the substitution of trochee for iambus. If *whán that* is a trochee in (1), why is not *whán they* in (59) and *which that* in (3385)? Prof. Skeat is himself inconsistent in this respect, for on p. xxxi he writes *háth in* (8) and on p. lxxxix, *hath in*, same line. It all depends upon which of the two words we regard as having the heavier stress, and opinions may differ about that. So, too, elision of *e* may be employed in the terminations *el. en, er*, as in *my fáder* (3385) even at the pause, and synizesis in *with mány a tère* (B 3368), as often in Milton and other later poets. I should also elide the *e* of the termination *-est* in *Thou ráviséd(e)st down fró the déitée* (B 1659), and I should prefer to contract *to han* to *t'an* (223), as *to* is often elided before a vowel. Again (p. lxx), *with yèn faste y-shette* (B 560), I should elide *e* and count *y* as a separate syllable *contra* Prof. Skeat.

But these are small matters, and in general I should concur in Prof. Skeat's scanning, even if I should make more frequent use of elision and contraction. It is certainly true that “mere counting of syllables will not explain the scansion of English poetry. Accent reigns supreme, and the strong syllables overpower the weak ones, even to the extent of suppressing them altogether” (p. xcvi); hence the greater need of elision and contraction.

The supplementary volume containing “Chaucerian and Other Pieces” is a distinct addition, and a valuable one, to the usual editions of Chaucer. Here we have twenty-nine pieces which, from time to time, have been attributed to Chaucer, or appended to his works, for the earlier editors, even while printing some of these pieces with Chaucer's works, did not assert that they were written by him, and later editors have made this mistake. These pieces are valuable for reference, even if they were not written by Chaucer.

The true authorship of the prose “Testament of Love” has at last been discovered, and the discovery is due to Mr. Henry

Bradley, co-editor with Dr. Murray of the Oxford English Dictionary. Prof. Skeat discovered that the first letters of the chapters of this work formed an acrostic, but he read the last word incorrectly, and so attributed the work to an imaginary "Kitsun." (See note 2, p. xii, vol. V.) Mr. Bradley discovered that the last six leaves of the MS were out of place, and after arranging them in the right order, we have as the acrostic: "Margarete of virtw, have merci on thin Usk." This confirmed Mr. Bradley's previous conjecture that Usk was the author of the work, i. e. one Thomas Usk, who was executed March 4, 1388. As he refers to events that happened towards the end of 1384 or later, the work is dated about 1387. (See Introduction to vol. VII, p. xx.) Prof. Skeat gives us (pp. xxiii, xxiv) some particulars about Usk, who, it seems, had been inclined to Lollard opinions, but recanted. He was, however, executed on the charge of treason by the Duke of Gloucester's party, as he favored the King against the Duke, whose regency the King was trying to overthrow.

I may correct just here some misreferences to this work, caused perhaps by the cancellation of certain pages which were reprinted and the references overlooked. On p. xxii, l. 20, ll. 131, 132 should be ll. 73, 75; l. 29, p. 140 should be p. 123; on p. xxvii, l. 29, p. 140, l. 292 should be p. 123, ll. 256 ff. The text of this work is due to Thynne's edition of Chaucer of 1532, as no MS copy of it has been discovered.

It would fill too much space to enumerate the titles of all these spurious pieces, but we find here one of Gower's, two of Hoccleve's, one of Scogan's, ten of Lydgate's, one of Sir Richard Ros's, one of Henryson's; and such well-known pieces as "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale," attributed to Sir Thomas Clanvowe, "The Flower and the Leaf" and "The Assembly of Ladies," by the same unknown authoress, "The Court of Love"—first printed by Stowe in 1561 from a MS still in existence in the library of Trinity College, and written in a hand of the sixteenth century—and some half-dozen shorter pieces, thus including works of twelve or fourteen different authors, and this does not exhaust the list.

We have here in one volume and in good texts all the most important pieces that have ever been attributed to Chaucer, and some unimportant ones. Prof. Skeat thinks (p. lxxiv) that the only correct method of drawing up a canon of Chaucer's genuine works is that adopted by the late Mr. Henry Bradshaw: "take a clean sheet of paper and enter upon it, first of all, the names of all the pieces that are admittedly genuine; and then see if it can fairly be augmented by adding such pieces as have reasonable evidence in their favor." By such a method he himself proved twenty years ago that "'The Court of Love' has no claim to be considered at all." In fact, such progress has now been made in a knowledge of Chaucer's style, grammar and metre that any

new claimant for admission to the list of genuine works must prove its right by fulfilling the requisite tests. The burden of proof is on that side. No one would now think, as formerly, of attributing works of the fifteenth century to Chaucer, for the language alone would suffice to convict the applicant of a false claim.

While the beautiful Oxford edition may not be within the reach of all, its cost alone sufficing to limit its circulation, the "Student's Chaucer," which contains the same text, and the "Globe Chaucer" are well within reach and will both serve to popularize a knowledge of Chaucer's works. The "Globe" edition is the latest claimant for favor. In it Mr. Pollard has written the "Life of Chaucer" and edited the "Canterbury Tales" and the "Legend of Good Women"; Mr. Heath has edited the "Minor Poems"; Mr. Liddell, the "Boece," "Treatise on the Astrolabe," and "Romaunt of the Rose"; and Mr. McCormick, the "Troilus and Criseyde." Although Prof. Skeat and Mr. Pollard both use the Ellesmere MS as the basis of their texts, we meet with occasional variations; lack of space forbids illustrations.

Prof. Skeat's edition of course "needs no bush"; it speaks for itself; but that of Mr. Pollard and his co-laborers can be cheerfully commended, and its very moderate price will also commend it to a large portion of the reading public.

JAMES M. GARNETT.

Caesar De Bello Gallico. Books I-VII. According to the text of Emanuel Hoffmann (Vienna, 1890). Edited with Introduction and Notes by ST. GEORGE STOCK. Oxford, At the Clarendon Press, 1898. Pp. xxi, 224, Introduction, + 334, Text and Notes.

This is an imposing volume, calculated to excite great expectations. Have we a new recension of the text? No. The text of Hoffmann, which the editor says he found "prescribed by the University," is closely followed, and no mention is made of the later recensions of Meusel and Kübler. No account is given of the important MSS, or of the classes α and β . Textual difficulties are often passed over without remark. Occasionally we are told that the best MSS or nearly all the MSS have a certain reading. The summaries given before each book are quite long, that to the seventh taking up fourteen pages. The commentary is brief, often a page of text being accompanied only by a line or two of annotation. Clearly, then, we have neither a complete critical nor a complete exegetical edition. We may congratulate the author upon the knowledge which he himself has gained in the preparation of the work, but why he was selected for the task is